

Debate Section  
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LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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LOK SABHA

Wednesday, 23rd November, 1955

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

12 NOON.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

SITUATION IN BOMBAY

**Dr. Lanka Sundaram** (Visakhapatnam): Before you call upon the hon. Home Minister to make a statement, may I make a submission?

**Mr. Speaker:** What submission does the want to make?

**Dr. Lanka Sundaram:** About the manner in which this adjournment motion is sought to be admitted now or not admitted. I will be very brief.

It is a very important question, and it is a question involving the procedure and privileges of this House. You will agree that this is not the occasion to go into the merits of the motion given notice of, nor for the Minister to make a long statement on the causation, progress etc. of the developments—very unfortunate indeed—in Bombay. A motion for adjournment, a censure motion and a vote of confidence are three distinct devices, each with different accent placed upon it. At the moment, it is procedurally and technically for you to decide whether this motion is admissible or not. Yesterday you deferred a decision on the matter as

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reference was made to the military being called in. The short point to be answered by the Minister under your direction is whether the military was called or not, and then it is for you to decide whether the motion is admissible or not. It has been the procedure all along in this Hon. House—and you have taken a conspicuous part in that—that whenever a motion for adjournment is given notice of, an opportunity is given to the Minister concerned to make a formal statement, including expressions of opinion etc. on the subject matter. I submit very humbly that this should not be the case, because—I repeat it—an adjournment motion does not automatically mean a vote of censure or a vote of no-confidence in Government. It is a device open to this House under the rules framed under your distinguished guidance to raise a discussion on a matter of definite urgent public importance. I am not unwilling to listen, to the Minister's statement. The facts are very important for the House and for the country, but the point I am now calling your attention to is that the Minister should not be allowed an opportunity to make a formal statement on the causation, progress etc. of the events; to decide the issue whether the motion is in order under the rules and under your direction yesterday to the Minister, he has only to state whether the military were called out or not. If that point is disposed of, it is for you to decide whether the motion is in order or not.

**Shri A. M. Thomas** (Ernakulam): Why should the hon. Member fight shy of a statement by the Minister?

**Mr. Speaker:** I have not been able to quite appreciate the point made by the hon. Member. How can I decide

[Mr. Speaker]

in the absence of facts? The facts have to be stated by the Minister. Some of the facts may be actual, some may be inferential. It is very difficult to make a distinction between facts and inferences at times; there are always cases on the borderline. Whatever that may be, yesterday I indicated that but for the mention of the military coming in, I would have straightway ruled that the motion related to a question of law and order in a State which would not be the responsibility of the Centre, and the motion could not be entertained. But as a reference was made to military operations or military being kept ready, I wanted to have the position clarified. It is for the hon. Minister to make such statement as he likes; he may make a full statement on the facts also. But I am not going to allow a discussion on the incidents in Bombay or the responsibility of the Government of Bombay.

**The Minister of Home Affairs (Pandit G. B. Pant):** I, as desired by you, make a statement to the House with a sense of deep distress and pain on the unfortunate incidents that have occurred in Bombay City. I place on the Table of the House a copy of a Press Note issued by the Bombay Government on the evening of 21st November [See Appendix I, annexure No. 38], giving an account of the disturbances of that day. The facts are as follows: On the 18th November, some people staged a demonstration in front of the Council Hall. The same evening a public meeting was held to protest against the proposal for creation of a Bombay State, and it was decided there to organise a *hartal* in the City on the 21st November. Active preparations through meetings, distribution of leaflets, posters, etc. were made for this purpose, throughout Greater Bombay, and particularly in labour areas. Inflammatory speeches inciting people to violence were also made. Consequently, rowdy elements created

disturbance by pelting stones etc. at a public meeting arranged on the 20th November at Chowpatty under the Chairmanship of Shri S. K. Patil. Early on the morning of the 21st November, hooligans and unsocial elements started attacking buses and trams in North Bombay. Pedestrians and passengers were injured by stones etc. that were thrown. Some police chowkis were attacked and set fire to. The Home Guards who went to quench the fire were also attacked. Running trains were also made the target of stones and acid bulbs. Some buses and trams were set on fire. At some places, police had to use lathi to quell disorder and disperse unruly crowds. At one place, they had to resort to firing. In the afternoon, the hooligans and miscreants moved to South Bombay. A large agitated crowd collected at Flora Fountain with an idea to march to the Council Hall. Police used tear-gas to disperse the crowd, but failed. The crowd became more violent and aggressive and pelted stones damaging public and private property and injuring a number of men and police. They also set fire to B.E.S.T. and police transport buses. The police were compelled to resort to firing which resulted in several casualties. About 155 persons were arrested. Total casualties during the course of the disturbances were: 12 dead and 266 injured including 56 with bullet wounds. Of the injured, 94 were detained in hospital for treatment. Eleven police officers, 15 constables and 23 Home Guards have also been injured. On the morning of the 21st November, when the crowd was becoming violent and threatening to resort to arson and damage to property on a large scale, the Bombay Government requested the local Army authorities to be in readiness to come to their assistance in the maintenance of law and order, should it become necessary. The contingency, however, did not arise and troops were not called out. From the morning of the 22nd November, conditions have been completely normal and the situation

continues to be quiet. We have been appealing to our people to look at the recommendations for readjustment of State boundaries in a spirit of tranquility and calmness detached from all prejudice, passion and emotion so that sound decisions could be reached and the country well shaped for carrying on the mighty endeavour of eliminating want and poverty from its midst. Greater and far-reaching changes have taken place in our country recently; about 600 princely States were integrated and reorganised within the great Indian Union without any stir or disturbance in an atmosphere of amity and goodwill. We have gained in stature and position in the international world and are expected, as a mature democratic nation, to be capable of handling difficult problems correctly and dispassionately. Incidents like these tarnish the good name of the country and vitiate the atmosphere. I hope that people will observe more than usual care and caution so that nothing likely to cause provocation or incitement to violence may be said or done and the intricate issues which have to be settled may be viewed in a proper perspective and weighed in a true balance without being swayed by any bias or passion. Our people will, I earnestly trust, prove equal to the occasion and see that peace and calm are maintained so that the purpose we have in view may be speedily and gracefully accomplished.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think—I have already expressed my view—that I can give my consent to this motion.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan (Cannanore):** May I make a request to you? As the matter is of very great importance, may I ask whether you will allow a one-hour discussion on this subject at some other time?

**Mr. Speaker:** I cannot say anything just at the moment. I shall consider the matter if the hon. Member gives notice of a motion. But so far as my mind is working at present, I do not

think he has any chance of succeeding with me in the admission of the motion. As I have stated very often, though this House may be sovereign, it is not that the autonomy of the States is to be interfered with. Law and order is purely a question which rests with the Government of Bombay in this case and there can be no discussion on a question relating to a State. That in short is the position.

**Shri A. K. Gopalan:** As Dr. Lanka Sundaram said, the point is that if the Minister had only stated that the military was called in, then you would have easily decided about the admissibility of the adjournment motion. But now these facts have been given, it is only one-sided and there are some facts with the people. If the admissibility of the adjournment motion was considered, as stated yesterday, on the basis whether the military was called in or not, then I would not have asked for a discussion.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think there is need for a discussion in view of the facts given by the hon. Minister.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande (Guna):** There is a precedent in this House in this connection and that was in the case of firing in Calcutta in which some journalists were ill-treated. Here also an eminent journalist has been killed and it is a sufficiently important episode and the House should be permitted to discuss this episode.

**Mr. Speaker:** The unfortunate journalist's relatives and friends have my fullest sympathy but that does not mean that we can allow a discussion on that question in this House.

#### COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

##### THIRTY-NINTH REPORT

**Shri M. A. Ayyangar (Tirupati):** I beg to present the Thirty-ninth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.